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1785

Indian Handicrafts

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

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Indian Handicrafts

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAYA

The book is a brief but authentic exposition of the traditional handicrafts of India. The author traces the origin of the handicrafts, examining their evolution through the ages and provides a graphic picture of the art and technique of the Indian handicrafts. The book contains forty-five select illustrations including thirteen in colour.

Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya whose work in resuscitating Indian Handicrafts has long been known and recognised internationally, is a distinguished writer and an authority on the subject. She is presently the Chairman of the All-India Handicrafts Board.

INDIAN HANDICRAFTS is the second to appear of a series of publications on art planned by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The first of the series, INDIAN SCULPTURE by C. Sivaramamurti was published by the Council in 1961. The next to appear will be "Drama in Rural India" by J. C. Mathur.

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by means of promoting cultural exchange with other countries
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in the field of culture.

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Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Indian Handicrafts

by

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya

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HANDICRAFTS IN INDIA

THE story of Indian handicrafts goes back somewhere into the mists of antiquity when the story of man itself began to be written or articulated, when the capacity of the hands to create was respected, even reverenced. The Indian handicrafts thrived through the ages helped by a vigorous folk tradition, a benign culture, and an age when individualism was cherished, and detail and precision valued. The painstaking labours of India's handicraftsmen found fulfilment in the unique objects of beauty they made. In time these went beyond the confines of their centres of production and spread out to all corners of India and then the world. The handicraft artisans of India were prized for their perfection of craftsmanship, excellence of design and form and an unsurpassed sense of colour. Gorgeous brocades and silks, gossamer muslins, carpets; varied articles of elegance and beauty in pottery, brass, bronze, copperware, silver, ivory and sandalwood were carried as treasures along the Silk Route by camel caravans to Samarkand, Baghdad and to the farthest outposts of the vast and rolling Mongolian Empire, to Egypt and Africa in the West and to the warm islands of the Indonesian Archipelago in the East. The Court of Solomon and Genghiz Khan and the Palace of the Ceasars received these objects of beauty as tributes from vassals or gifts from friends,

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From time immemorial the village and cottage crafts seemed to have played a pivotal role in the social and economic life of the Indian people. The excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa show that as early as the second millennium before Christ, the City had already arrived on the Indian scene. There were busy metropolitan commercial centres from which radiated economic and cultural influences over a wide arc of area. But these cities were possible because of the existence of an extensive circle of numerous village communities producing that surplus on the accumulation and exchange of goods on which the cities thrived.

The continued existence of cottage industries meant, to an appreciable extent, the decentralisation of social and economic power and the creation of an institutional plurality which effectively stood between the ordinary citizen and a powerful State. Besides providing ample employment to the rural folk, the cottage industries played an important role in the process of decentralisation of economic power on the rural level. The ability of the village to fulfil its own manufacturing needs gave it a remarkable social cohesion which could not be loosened in any significant way by even the most devastating war. History may have happened in Pataliputra or Kanauj, Delhi or Agra, but it was always *against* the backdrop of stability in village life. The cottage industries almost acted as a defensive economic wall against the ravages of time and man. And these industries were by no means primitive. Within their warp and woof they displayed fine skill and varied techniques developed through generations of dignified toil. Through the centuries until the calculated destruction of the indigenous industries in British times, the products of India were famed in all the markets of the world. These brought wealth to the country but it seldom concentrated in a few layers of society. It is true that the royalty displayed fabulous riches, but poverty was not so great and absolute as in more recent times. If the cottage industries taught the village independence in its ordinary life from the exactions of the Capital, they also taught the people in the village interdependence.

Handicraft is rightly described as the craft of the people. In India it is not an industry as the word is commonly understood; for the produce is also a creation symbolising the inner desire and fulfilment of the community. The various pieces of handicrafts whether metalware, pottery, mats or wood-work,

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clearly indicate that while these are made to serve a positive need in the daily life of the people, they also act as a vehicle of self-expression for they reveal a conscious aesthetic approach. At the same time, they manifest in their structure the principles of Silpa Sastra, the ancient scientifically evolved formulae and regulations for manufacturing.

In the peace and quiet seclusion of the countryside the village community evolved a culture of its own out of the steady flow of its own life and of the nature around it. The community acted as a single personality because of the common integrated pattern of life, in responding to the common joys and burdens of life, to the common occasions and landmarks that stood out in the flux of time and the change of seasons. Out of a million coloured strands of tradition filled with song and verse, legends, myths, native romances and episodes, from the substance of the every day life of the community, and out of nature's own rich storehouse, was woven a rich, creative and forceful art.

The craftsman's position in the predominantly agricultural society was pivotal, for it made the village society self-contained, a characteristic of India through the long ages and which later inspired in Gandhiji the dream of Sarvodaya—a self-supporting community which stood for the good of all. The social functioning was based on a code of personal relations and duties handed down from generation to generation instead of on contract and competition, with services being paid for in kind rather than cash, normally in grain at harvest time or a share in the communal land. A rigid adherence to the concept, that each man is born to his ordained work through which alone he can progress spiritually; and through the fulfilment of this Dharma or duty to final Moksha or liberation, provided the sanctions and the stability to this vast but well ordered system and ensured a high degree of perfection to the arts and crafts. The execution of the craft was not just an economic compulsion but a sacred duty. This largely explains the very meticulous care and devotion with which the humblest work was performed. The commonest of articles were endowed with beauty, for each task was a dedication.

The artisan was an important factor in the equation of the Indian society and culture. By performing valid and fruitful social functions for the

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community, he earned for himself a certain status and a responsible position in the society. He worked for those whom he knew and this gave a touch of personal intimacy to the work. He made things mainly for the use of the people around him and not so much for sale in a distant market-place. His work was evaluated not in mere terms of money but rather to entitle him to the necessities of life and leisure, and rest in sickness and old age. He was not at the mercy of the middle man or a changing clientele. He was an heir to the people's traditions and he wove them into his craft making it into an art. The bold local styles that the village artisans evolved operated as a great lever in the evolution of Indian art adding to the wealth and variety of colour and design.

To discover the sources of inspiration and to gather the full significance of the vast field of Indian handicrafts they have to be seen in the context of the background from which they have emerged, the dark toned bodies of the people for whom they were made and to fit into the serene flow of their lives.

Innumerable invasions of virile nomadic peoples who migrated over the length of India, the intermingling of vast civilisations, the impacts of alien myths, symbols and superstitions, the ancient gods and cults of the original inhabitants of this land, the geographical distribution of mountains, deserts and lush vegetation and the presence of minerals, salts and water were factors that moulded the aesthetic norms of a people nurtured on space-time concepts which emerged from chaos and formulated through millenniums.

It was against this background that hereditary groups of every type of artisans arose, organised within the rigid systems and protected by rigid laws, which ensured the high standard and continuity of these crafts. Tracing their origin to Visvakarma, the deity of crafts and the very source of the creative intellect, the craftsman combined within his being the functions of both conceiver and executor. He became in society the symbol of the outer manifestations of the creative purpose. The integration of creative endeavour for livelihood and the refusal to permit outer influence to loosely permeate and corrupt the unconscious process of renewal, lead to a great flowering of the craft tradition. The craftsman was the unbroken link in the tradition that embraced both the producer and the consumer within the social and religious fabric. Art and aesthetics were deeply

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rooted in function. Ornamentation and decoration was not divorced from utility.

On the organisational side, community of interests drew together the artisans who soon came to form guilds in India even as in Europe, Egypt and other regions. The guilds did not originally correspond to a sectarian or ethnical caste as is generally believed. As a matter of fact, the same trade was sometimes followed by men of different castes. Membership was normally hereditary but newcomers were admitted on payment of a fee. It was the guilds which regulated the hours of labour and the quantity of work for each through strictly enforced bye-laws and fining defaulters. The guild also prevented undue competition between guilds and negotiated in cases of dispute. No overtime in a trade was allowed to any workman if there was unemployment in the same trade. The guilds not merely regulated wages but enforced the use of pure materials and a high excellence of workmanship. Each guild was managed by a court of Mahajans or kind of aldermen, with a special position to the Seths or chiefs of the guilds. In the larger towns and cities, the guilds seemed to have weilded considerable influence, for the Seth of the guild became Nagar Seth, the titular head of all the guilds and the highest personage in the city and accepted as its representative by the government. The guilds built temples and also spent for welfare work from the guild funds which were augmented through special collection drives.

Based as the craft tradition was on a background of myth, symbol and fantastically rich imagery culled from the stories of the Puranic legends, there was no scope for stagnation. Although the forms in a manner repeated themselves, they were free from imitative intention, and each productive act was spontaneously linked with the stream of man's life and was a dynamic symbol of man's endeavour to express universal human emotions and interests.

Two main channels of craft expression developed. The one concerned with the treatment of surface as symbolised by inlay or enamel, reflecting as in a mirror the streams of people's lives and culture patterns that for a time commanded its patronage, responding to every sophistication and rarity of elegance. The other, structural in concept, rooted in the endless search, reflecting the familiar forms of the unchanging pattern of the village unit,

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the romance and emotional background of nomadic tribes, the rituals that bound man in invisible chains of a hoary past.

Indian handicrafts have thus been in a class by themselves. They express a great national heritage. While aesthetically fine, they were, nevertheless, essentially articles of utility. From the humble water-pot of clay to the curved knife to cut vegetables, from the cloth which covered the human form to the fabric flung on the bullock's back, every piece was a work of art, enriched by beautiful lines, vivid colours and alluring designs. Nothing was created to be kept as a dead piece in a glass case to be merely looked at or to trumpet the affluence of the owner. Beauty was not an isolated item, it was an integral part of one's intimate life. Whatever the article in use, no matter how mundane, it had to be beautiful. Decoration was not an end in itself. It had to serve a social purpose. In fact as in music, dance and painting, each creation had a mood or essence of its own—Rasas as they are called; and each was expressed in a recognised form like the Abhinaya or gesture symbols in dance or raga in music. Like acting in the classical Indian drama nothing was left to chance or the vagaries of the artist. Each move was worked out with care and precision.

Today people have an idea that beauty is the prerogative of the rich alone, for it is believed that beautiful things are expensive and beyond the reach of the ordinary man. Our tradition, however, is that an industrial object is also a work of art, and even though the Indian artisan seldom rose above the traditions, he was all the same an artist.

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THE MOTIF

THE decorative motifs in the Indian craft go deep into the earliest time. For the tribal crafts are not always crude or archaic. They have a pattern of their own which within a rigid circumference laid down by a hoary tradition has attained a perfection. These crafts show a long and continued development and manifest their powerful impact on the basic trends of Indian artistic crafts. These folk forms have crept into the new emergent creations so inexplicably that in fact in many cases the dividing line between the two is either thin or almost non-existent. Let us take for instance the textiles. From the technical as well as the aesthetic aspect, the tribal fabrics are superb, like the Naga weaves or Toda embroideries which are highly stylised. In a way the more typical of the folk forms have a more universal appeal particularly the toys. The popularity of the Bankura terracotta horse is an example of this. Interesting is it to see so much of what today is termed 'abstract' in these folk expressions which are of psychological and sociological significance. Because in folk art nothing is accidental or freakish. Every detail has a meaning and a symbolic significance, though some of this may have even been forgotten. Much of it is ritualistic and religious. A great deal of the Hindu pantheon reveals the absorption of folk symbols and beliefs. So does all Indian art. One can

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take such classical expressions as at Ajanta, Sanchi, Khajuraho and see the dim reflections of the ancient people who once inhabited these regions, now termed reminiscently 'Adivasis'. They are easily recognisable by the style of their costumes, ornaments and physical characteristics. Basically the folk crafts reflect the physical environment as well as the raw material on which the craftsman works. The rocks, forests, deserts, water, animals, birds, these reflect the background. Similarly with the material, stone or wood, the craftsman seems to merge the artist in him into the thing he is working on, thus bringing out the inherent lines and grain to life—an inanimate object galvanised into a living thing in its entirety, not merely through a designed shape.

It is said that with the tribals the objects also vary between those made by a man and by a woman and the Nagas and their baskets are cited as examples; that while men have flat bottoms, those made by the women have pointed ones. And while these expressions may have some variations from North to South, East to West, there is indeed a common thread running through all of them. In the terracottas, particularly the horses, one finds this similarity between Gujarat, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Madras. There can be no more eloquent testimony to the impregnable unity of this country. Equally fascinating is it to see the same uninterrupted thread tying up the rolling centuries into a common shape when we watch an Indian potter spin his wheel as he skilfully caresses the clay with tender devotion to coax it into the desired shape of his dreams. There before our eyes, the centuries melt swiftly away. It is the same potter who in the fabulous Mohenjodaro gave life to the clay in the same shapes, lines, curves, depressions. It is a miracle but simple and true!

Ancient beliefs and traditions have had a continuous flow and whenever any outside influence came, this sturdy culture assimilated as much as it could to keep in harmony with itself without losing its own basic character, by sublimating the new into the old patterns, to widen them into fresh and striking expressions.

The craft was motivated by utilitarian and ritualistic factors and sometimes by individual creative impulses.

It may not, however, be easy to find a satisfactory or uniform explanation for the meaning of the motifs. Some are described as 'ageless' as they seem

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to be true of all times like the lotus, the serpent, the elephant, the chakra, certain trees etc. The many new influences which kept flowing into the country touched each facet with a delicate finger leaving a deep impress of its own beauty. The impacts came from Central and West Asia, Persia and Greece. Even in the early Aryan crafts traces of Assyrian forms are noticed. The flavour of the Persian influence has been a strong and abiding one, as under the Moghul rulers, Persian crafts and craftsmen were patronised and introduced into India. The Indian craftsman as usual rose to the occasion. He blended with subtle ingenuity the old and the new and a new style was created which is still with us to delight our hearts and our senses. The delicate floral and bird designs in our fabrics and carpets, on metal and papier-mache, on marble and clay, the inlay in silver and ivory, the embroidery in zari and silk, all bear the stamp of this new culture which has now passed into our arts and crafts. Kashmir crafts have these in abundance. In the zari embroidered caps, bags, and cushions of Delhi and Agra, the brassware of Moradabad, the inlay of Hoshiarpur, one sees the lines, curves and shapes from the old Persian designs.

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POTTERY

POTTERY is a basic craft of very ancient origin. It symbolises man's creativeness in unison with nature. Moulded out of earth, man in his turn took the earth in his hands and shaped a whole world of teeming shapes out of it to extend the boundaries of his material existence and to express his creative spirit. From earliest times, the pot, whether moulded by hands or thrown on the potter's wheel, has remained a symbol of man's first craftsmanship and the ancient civilizations are judged by the degree of skill and beauty that is contained in their pottery. The potter's wheel was the first instrument that used man's inventiveness to design forms that could afford him both use and delight. It is an humble Indian craft that has a great tradition and though it has suffered much deterioration in these days of mass production, we still catch glimpses of the original beauty and skill especially in some specimens of traditional village pottery that finds its way to melas (fairs) and rural markets. The pottery recovered in the Indus valley excavations, points to well made articles, with brilliant colour slips or ornamental paintings, covering a wide range from domestic wares to ritualistic.

In these the technique of painting scenes is as assured and as sophisticated as the forms, and the decorations which consisted of vigorous incised painted

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patterns seemed naturally related to the shape of each article. Probably many of them were symbolic. The Harappa pottery is also noted for 'Faience'. Faience gets its name from the town of Faenza, where it is said to have been first manufactured but later came to connote a special ceramic product. This is an artificial substance manufactured out of a composition of base mixed with powdered glaze, fired to form a vitrous material, with a glazed surface to be coloured in manufacture by the addition of various mineral substances to the composition. The process is complex, intimately associated with the use of fretsquartz grams covered with glazes. That such an elaborate and intricate technique was in use, speaks volumes for the high development of crafts of that period. Not only pottery but other articles such as beads were made out of faience. From the later Harappa period glazed pottery made its appearance and has continued down to the present day.

The real beauty and strength of Indian pottery is in its fine classical forms. But all the skill and experience of the Indian potter spun round the ordinary clay pots as the Hindus rarely ate out of clay trays or bowls, and this may account for the restricted use of glaze. As a matter of fact, the Kumbhar (village potter) produced the basic shapes and a different set of artisans, the Koshigars, put on the decorations or glaze of lacquer. In al these household articles very rightly the beauty of the form was emphasized. Neither vivid hues nor heavy ornamentation disturbed the perfect line and symmetry of the article. Whether in clay or metal one sees this subordination of the decoration to the dignity of the form. Even where ornamentation or painting were used, care was taken to see it enhanced the delicacy of the surface or the curvatures of the shape. As Birdwood says in his book 'Industrial Arts of India' : "The correlation of his forms, colours and details of ornamentation is perfect and without seeming premeditation as if this were rather a creation of nature than a work of art; and this is recognised, even in the most homely objects, as the highest achievement of artifice". Under the Muslim rulers, particularly the Moghuls, the glazing got largely centred round tiles especially for mosques and tombs where one sees to this day superb samples of delicately tinted surfaces on which are traceries of intricate designs of geometrical patterns, flowers and birds, each like a pictorial dream. Delhi, the seat of many empires, has perhaps the most

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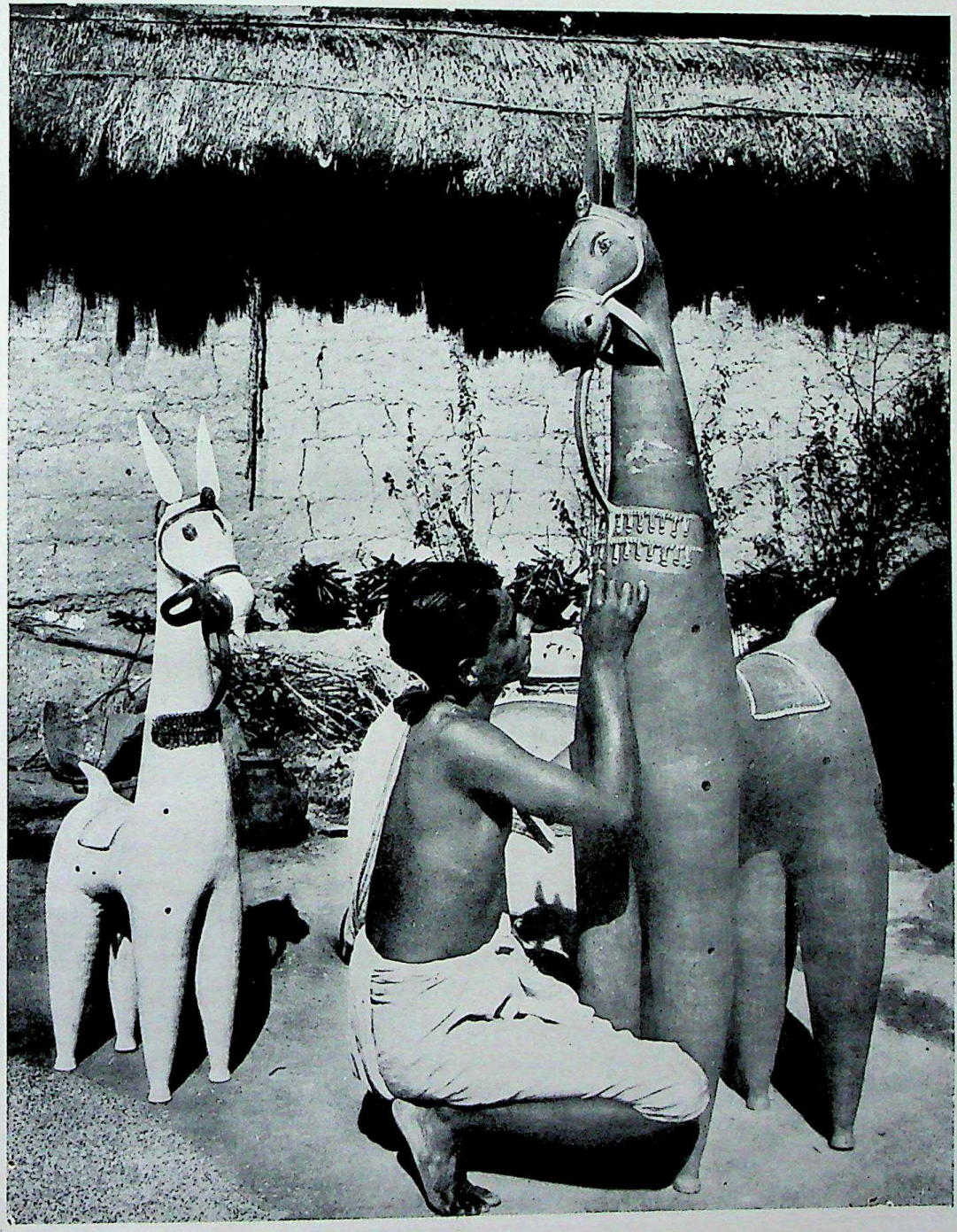

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picturesque tradition in its blue turquoise pottery, the tint being derived from cobalt and copper oxides. One finds semi-transparent surface also in it, decorated with arabasque patterns. Delhi also had porcelain worked through a paste cast into the mould. There are evidences of some of the old Indian glazed tiles which show a predominantly Hindu character like those of Gaur, a famous capital city of old Bengal. This suggests that enamelled pottery was in vogue even before the advent of Central Asian and Persian influences.

Manufacture of both ordinary as well as glazed pottery is too universal to need enumeration. A few are, however, outstanding like the blue pottery of Delhi which is being revived after a decline; the glazed pottery of Kanigiri, Madras State, in which the traditional shape is a kind of a globular bowl, generally pierced to circulate the air inside an inner porous bowl, glazed dark green or rich golden brown and fretted all over by notches in the clay. There has been a departure here from the conventional since the Handicrafts Board made it a centre for intensive development and research and new shapes and tints have been introduced. Kashmir has ordinary clay pottery with a glaze-like surface which makes it decorative and attractive in its wide variety of colours. The main article in this variety is the Hukka—the Hubble-bubble. With some technical improvement, it could certainly prove a fine variety. The painted pottery of Saurashtra and Gujarat is distinctive and the wide range of shapes and painted designs make them very alluring. In fact, they are widely used for decorative purposes not only at ceremonials but even social functions in several parts of the country. They are also available in toy sizes, often painted in glowing gold paint. Painted and gilt pottery is also made in parts of Rajasthan, especially Jaipur is noted for its decorative motifs on white background unique in its composition being made out of quartz. A unique type is the Azamgarh pottery in Uttar Pradesh. Though easily breakable it has a striking appearance with a set background in which scintillating silvery ornamentation is done by etching the pattern on the dark surface after baking and rubbing into it mercury and tin. Here an artistic effect is sought to be produced, not content with mere aesthetic shapes. Khurja in Uttar Pradesh is another noted centre. It attained fame for its very

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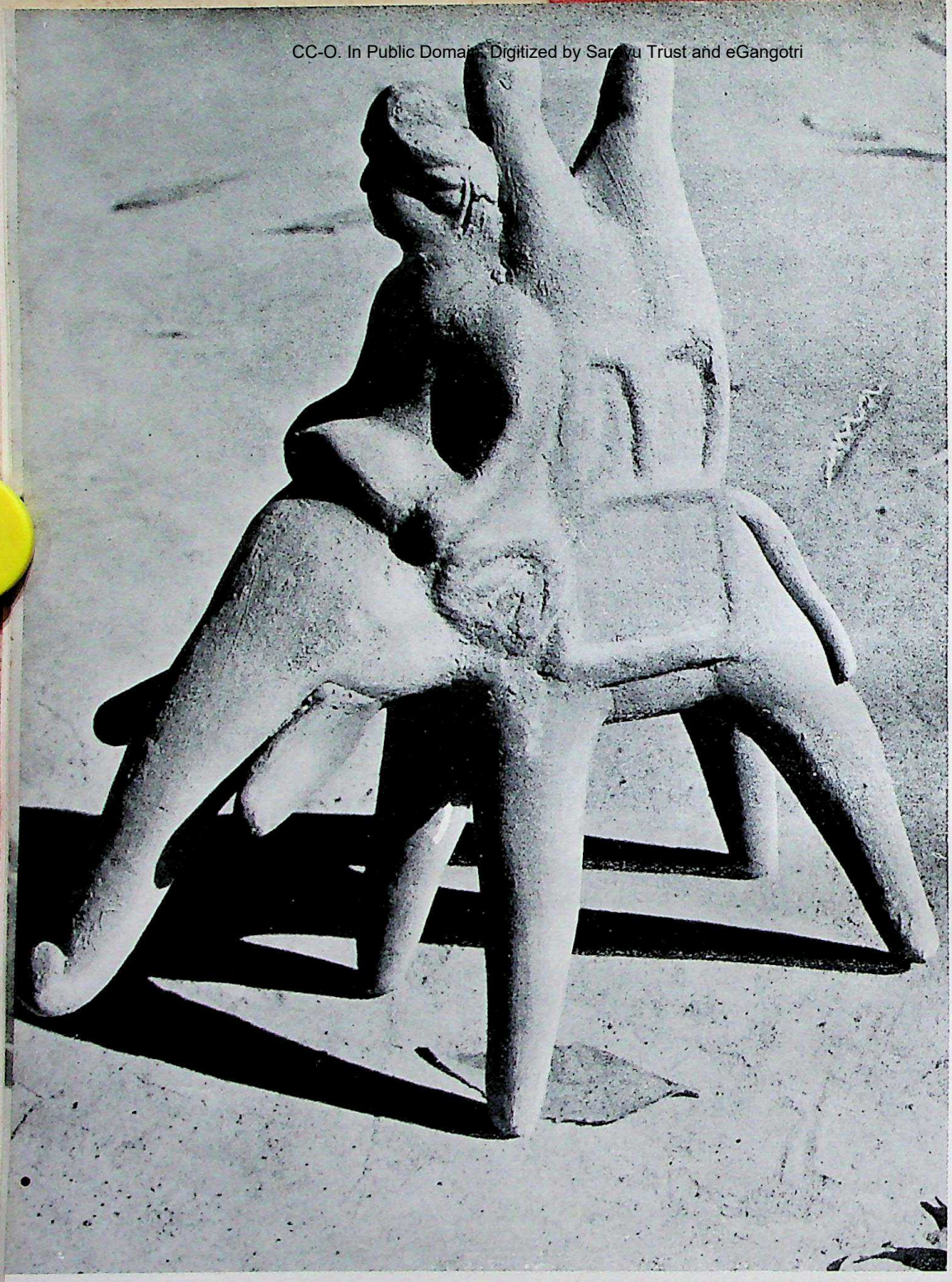

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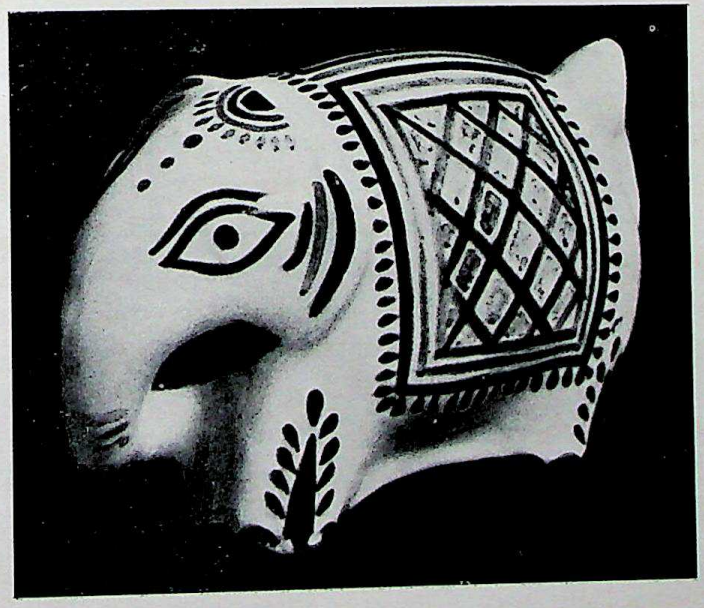
distinctive style in which the pattern was raised by the use of thick "slips" into light relief. The body generally consisted of warm autumnal colours or sky blue floral designs on white background. It was also equally noted for its beautifully proportioned shapes, among which was a distinctive type of pitcher known as "Pilgrim's bottle", decorated in relief by the use of thick slip. It has now introduced more modern shapes and items.

The genius of the common potter has to be judged also by the enormous size of some of the products he throws on his ridiculously simple wheel, like grain storing jars, often over five feet in height designed to hold over a ton; or the *Gram Devathas* (village gods) very big in size, as well as animals in varying sizes on which the gods and goddesses ride. The *Gram Devathas* are exquisite and comprise a category of art by itself. They are prepared with great devotion, the women usually making the decorations with infinite care and sensitivity. As a matter of fact, one finds these village gods all over India, testifying to the essential unity of the country. The painting on pots developed into a very fine art and soon came to take on social and ritualistic significance. Pots were painted with special designs for marriages, festivals and various auspicious occasions, providing a striking array of lovely objects, such as a distinctive category of animals, birds, flowers, human figures in multifarious colours.



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METALWARE

NEXT to clay, metal has been most universally used, the baser metals like brass, copper, bell-metal covering all domestic dishes, ritualistic vessels and a host of other things such as bells, censers, jewel boxes, *pan* boxes, lamps etc. In addition, an important item in metals is sculptural images for worship which form a sizeable portion in metal casting. As in clay, the emphasis is more on beautiful lines and forms rather than ornamentation. Therefore, one found a very wide range in shapes perhaps a hundred or more in each category of tumblers, bowls, pots, storage jars for water and grain each with its own structural beauty which was a delight to the eye. A departure, however, was made in the case of vessels used in rituals, which were decorated, often elaborately, chased, and encrusted. In middle class families, vessels for eating and drinking were made of silver. Commonly these were plain but designed in lovely lines. There were decorative pieces also. Gold plates seem to have been in use in princely households at one time, but not any more.

It is this insistence on the perfection of every article, no matter how humble or ordinary its use, that enabled the cultivation and maintenance of good taste in the large masses of the people. True the patterns tended to get

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set except that within certain rigidity there was ample scope for new innovation. The very fact that hundreds of designs and shapes are found in each item is proof enough of the diversity and that the master craftsmen were alive and creative, and staleness was not permitted. The rules laid down in *Silpa Sastra* were to ensure the correct structural proportions and quality of the article. That these were manitained even under western impact until modern industrialisation began to unsettle them is a tribute to the artisans' tenacity to hold on to their tradition even under very adverse circumstances, as well as the strength of that tradition.

Indian steel has been celebrated from earliest antiquity. The famous blades of Damascus and Persia were made of Indian steel. The proficiency attained in metal casting by the craftsmen and the high sophistication is proved by the rich copper and bronze objects discovered in excavations. Some of the figures are stylised like the clay figurines of the time. The high sophistication of the metal work is proved by objects like the metal mirror where the handle is carved as a woman in the conventional style, with the head provided only by the reflection of the user of the mirror, which is unique. One of the outstanding pieces of Harappa metalware is a bronze figure of a dancing girl of the third millennium B.C. in which the head has been fixed separately with metal pegs, the arms and the legs being designed to be in more than one piece similarly held together, and speaks of sensitive modelling of the body and limbs. It definitely foreshadows the latter Indian aristocratic modes in metal craft. At Taxila was unearthed a very beautiful gold casket studded with precious stones.

Birdwood refers to a *lota* which lay buried for 1500 years attributed to 200-300. A.D. "It is exactly of the shape now made, is encased all round with a representation of Prince Siddharth before his conversion, going in procession.....the copper statue of Buddha at Sultanganj (now in some private hands in Birmingham) is the largest metal work of ancient times and a monument of the early proficiency of the Hindus in melting and casting metal". He also refers in great admiration to the Kutab Minar cast in 400 A.D. and observes : "It opens our eyes to an unsuspected state of affairs to find the Hindus at that age capable of forging a bar of iron larger han any forged in Europe upto a late date".

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Banaras and Moradabad are noted for the variety and excellence of metalware, both plain as well as ornamental. Banaras is specially noted for metal images as well as vessels with sculptured mythological figures on them, designed mainly for use in rituals. Moradabad caters much more to modern tastes and has a sizeable export trade in metalware. It uses white metal as well as electroplated brass and copper and makes many accessories for modern use, often by modifying some of the traditional. Lucknow goes in much more for ornamental repousse of animals and flower motifs and pierced designs. Bengal and Kerala as also Mysore and Assam are known for bell-metal. This gorgeous metal is seen best in plain shapes, where its golden tint gleams to great effect. Incense burners are a speciality and are found in a great many shapes, from plain domed heads to peacock or lotus shapes.

Similarly, lamps form a large category of their own. The South is particularly famous for these near million forms. Each is a perfect work of art, and varies from region to region. They are either designed for hanging or to be stood up on a stand. Some are made like a big branch in a tree with a metal canopy shaped like an umbrella. Some of them can hold a hundred cotton wicks and burn like a hundred tongues. Some have animal shapes like the horse, elephant, lion or birds or figures. Their stems too are carved in various forms.

Then there are bells, in which again one finds hundreds of varieties in shapes and forms. There are those with handles and those for hanging around the necks of animals or round the ankles for dancing, which are also noted for their purity and depth of their melodious notes.

Ahmedabad has been famous for ornamental braziers, exquisite metal screens and *pan* boxes. A little village, Murbad, not far from Bombay has attained distinction in copperware and oxidised wares, mostly for modern use.

Some of the articles in Jaipur are enamelled, making them fine pieces of art. Quite outstanding is the Tanjore work, some of the finest in India, with elaborately inwrought ornamentation. Leaf and floral designs are etched or deeply cut. Sometimes, mythological scenes are encrusted. Its unique character lies in the inlaying of one metal over another, say copper on brass, silver on copper, brass on copper etc. This produces a startling effect of its own. Some are ornamented on hammered work in copper or brass with

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pleasing effect. In the Almora region of Uttar Pradesh, vessels are made in two tones, part in brass, part in copper, giving them an unusual richness by alternating in gold and copper shades.

Kashmir has a distinct metalware of its own. Here tin is soldered on copper that has already been deeply graven with a diffused floral design, which is then filled in with a black composition. The most common are little rosettes studded round the object and stand out like silver crusts against the rich black background of delicate foliated scrolls that have the appearance of lace.

Bidri, a form of damascening in silver was once practised in many parts of India but today lingers only in few, the most noted being Mysore State where the small town of Bidar is from which it takes the name, as also of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. In origin damascening is peculiarly oriental and gets its name from Damascus where it is supposed to have originated.

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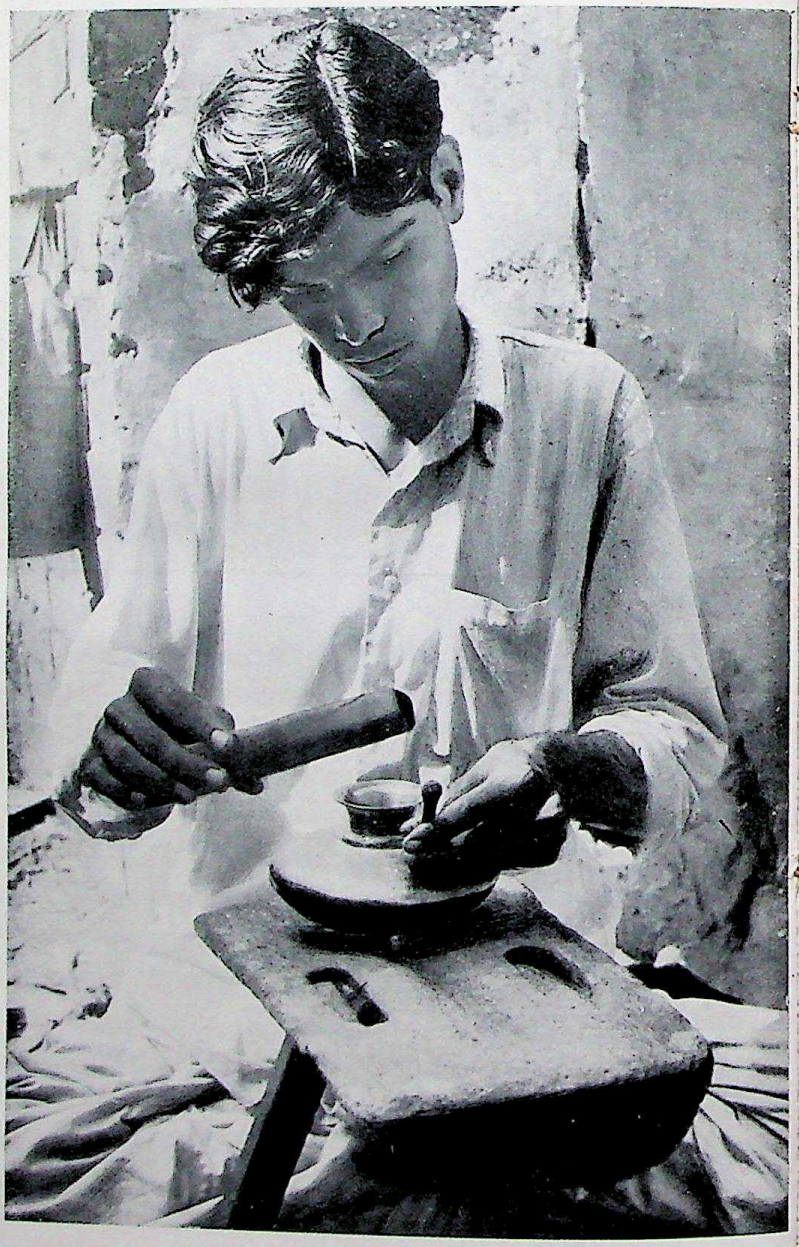

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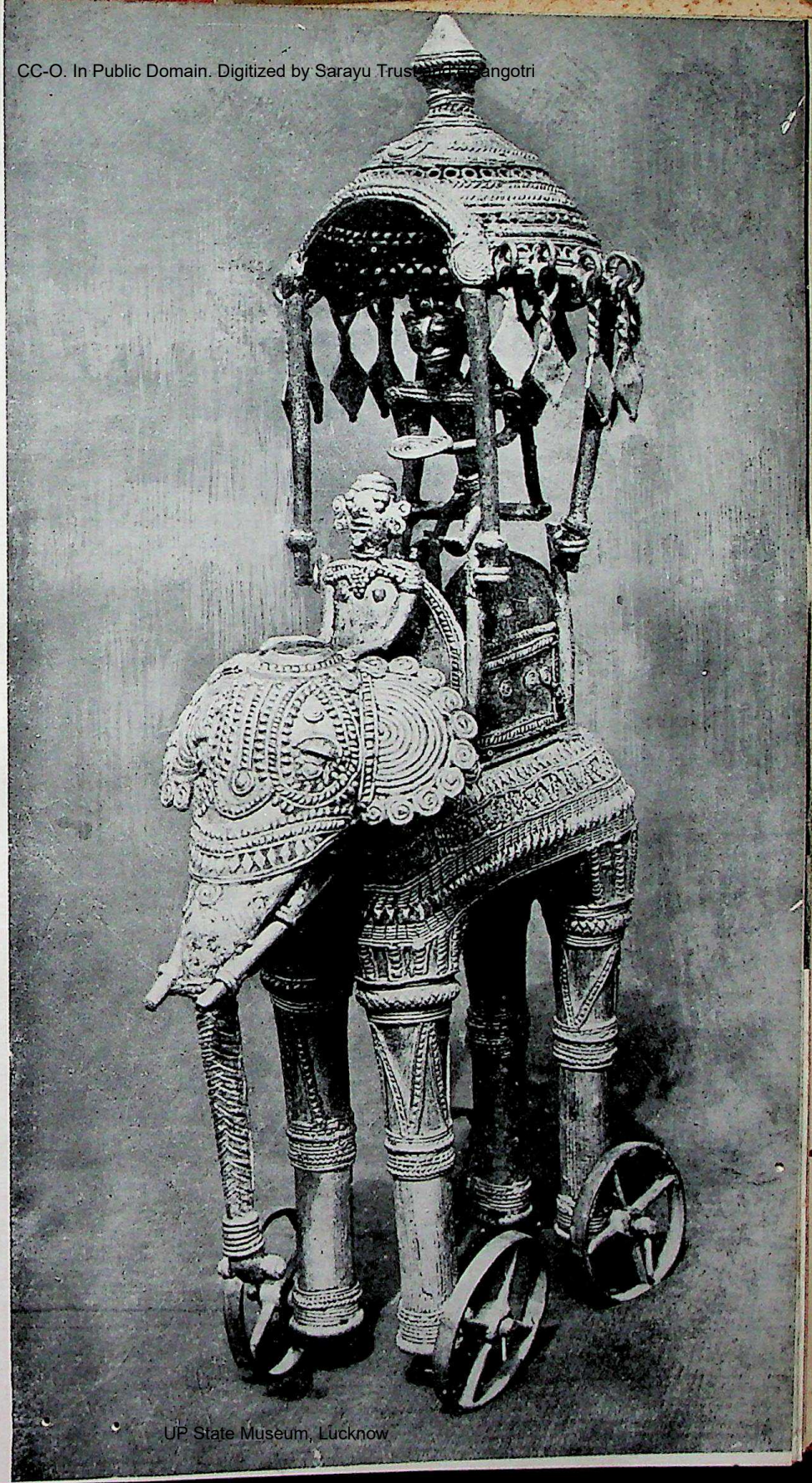

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In Bidri the metal ground is copper, tin, lead, made black on the surface by a solution of sal-ammoniac and saltpetre. In U.P. blue vitriol is also added. When the required pattern is graven over the article under preparation, and inlaid with silver, it is washed and polished with a little oil and the effect is magical, the lovely silver designs scintillating against an ebony hued background. In this there are two styles, the *Teh Hashen* which is the deeply cut work and *Zar Nashan* where the work is raised. There is another style in this called *Koft* done by simply laying gold leaf on the steel plate on the design already etched until it adheres to it. Kashmir is noted for it.

Ornamentation on arms was an extension of metal craft. For variety, superb workmanship and gorgeous designs, the Indian arms have few equals. Costly damascened, sculptured and jewelled swords, shields, spears, daggers, matchlocks are fine works of art. Birdwood in his book describes a suit of armour, of the horny scales of the Indian armadillo encrusted with gold and precious stones and another, a Kashmir chain armour as delicate as lace. Most of this has naturally disappeared but daggers and knives are still made with traditional ornamentation and are very popular.

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TEXTILES

COTTON textiles seem to have been prevalent in India from the earliest times. Once again the Indus Valley excavations reveal a well developed stage in woven and dyed fabrics. Fine weaving in course of time became an art and India became renowned for its gold and silver wrought tissues and brocades and intricate weaves producing marvellous effects. This superb weaving goes back to the Vedic period for there are several references to these beautiful fabrics in the different Vedas. The epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata enumerate them as silks, woollens, fibres, even furs. Cloth of gossamer fineness as well as heavy richness inwrought with gold, silver, precious stones were manufactured and became the coveted possessions of countries far and near. Some of the muslins were absolutely fabulous. A fifteen-yard piece weighed only 900 grains. A wet muslin piece laid on the grass would be invisible and because it was indistinguishable from the evening dew, it was named *Shabnam*—the evening dew. Another was called *Abe-Rawan* or running water, as it became invisible in water. There was also *Bafthma*—woven air. It is believed that fine weaving passed on from India to Assyria, Egypt and through the Phoenicians into Southern Europe, and fabrics in imitation were said to have been first attempted in Italy in the 13th Century and

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later in the 17th introduced in Manchester in England. The introduction of machines however reversed the situation, for the production became highly accelerated and therefore much cheaper than hand woven.

Cotton weaving in India is so universal that it would be difficult to list places where some weaving is not done. Some places, however, have attained prominence, each for a particular variety. At one time cloth was woven only from handspun yarn. Today both are there. Khaddar woven only from handspun yarn has come to assume a certain political significance having been given a dominant place in national affairs. Madhubani in Bihar and Ponduru in Andhra are noted for very fine Khadi of the soft gossamer variety. Khadi is made in a wide range of prints and many of the designs available in the ordinary handloom. Silk Khadi is also available in practically all the designs as ordinary handlooms.

The general costume of India consists of long strips of material of standard length and width for sarees, dhotis, turbans, shawls, scarves. The enhancement of the beauty of fabrics through various techniques of weaving, dyeing, printing, embossing, embroidery etc. is an integral feature of these costumes. Thus each region developed its own special characteristics, especially in sarees. The most famous is Banaras which is known for brocades with its silk and metal ornamentation. These fabrics display some of the most complicated weaves in gold, silver and silk, with an infinite variety of designs. Equally elaborate but entirely different in style are Patola of Gujerat and the Ikat of Orissa, both following the same technique except that the latter is in Tasser silk and therefore cheaper than the former which is in pure heavy silk and more expensive. In cotton the same style is done in Pochampalli and Chirala in Andhra Pradesh and Sambalpur and other places in Orissa. They are always in geometrical designs and even if floral designs are chosen, they are set in geometrical patterns. The jewel-like colours in the double and/or single Ikats of Gujerat and Orissa respectively, result from the warp and/or weft yarns first having been tightly tied and dyed according to the given design, dried, untied and then loom-woven. Paithan has a distinct style of its own in silk with elaborate gold ornamentation in pallav and border, going back to 300-200 B.C. It had become extinct but has now been revived by the Handicrafts Board. The technique is similar to the

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Jala system employed in Banaras brocade weaving, the repeat pattern first being established by fastening the original design painted on paper underneath the warp strands and shuttling the bobbins carrying the weft yarns over and under them to produce exquisite forms of flowers, birds and even *Krishna Leela* scenes.

Chanderi sarees and turbans from Madhya Pradesh are soft and almost gauzy, woven in silk and cotton. They are simple but elegant and available in gentle and subtle shades, rather rare in Indian fabrics, with generally plain body and light gold or silver borders and two similar bands to form the

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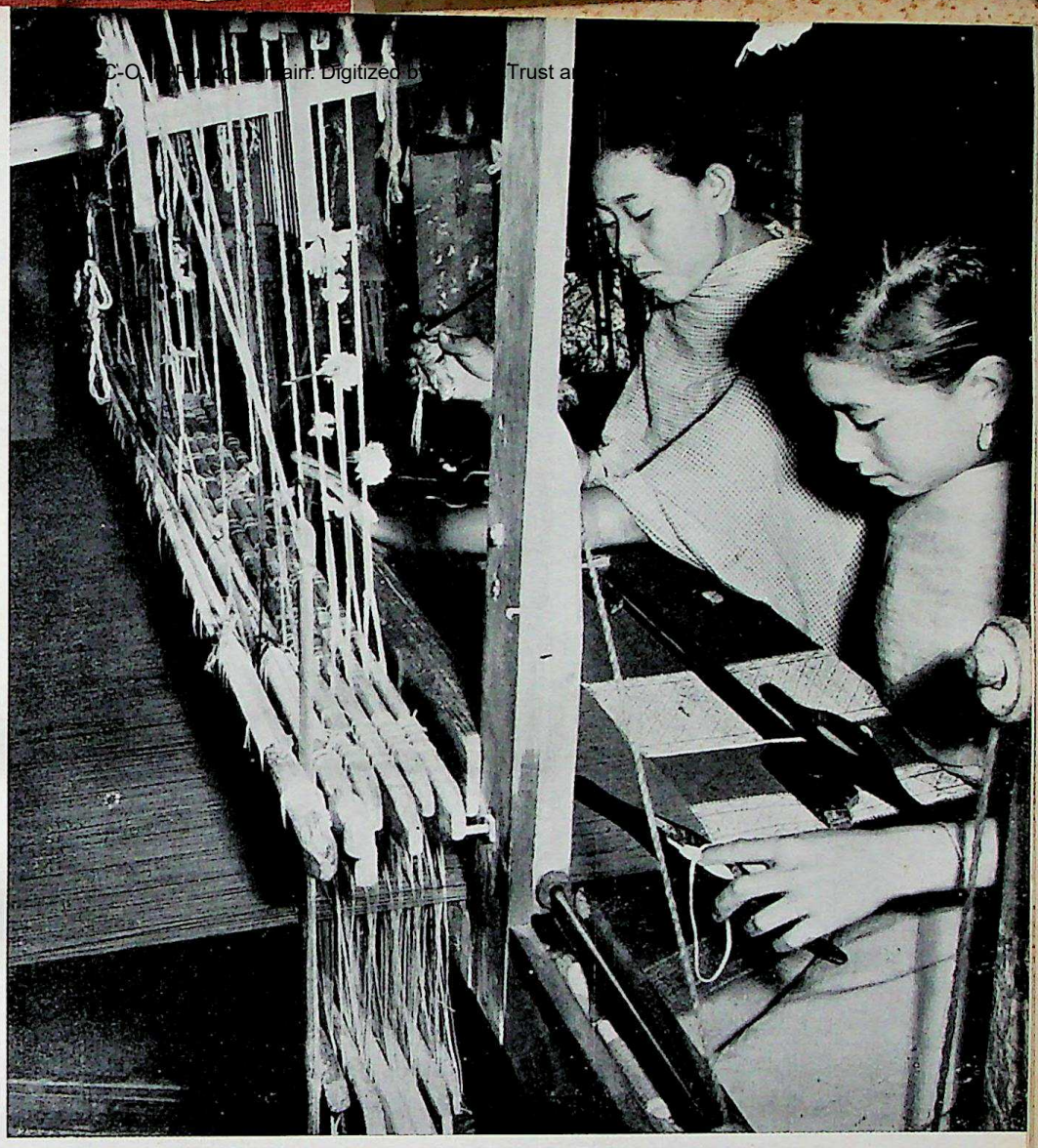

pallav. Maheshwari, also from Madhya Pradesh, is woven in pure cotton or in silk and cotton. It is common in narrow stripes or checks, with narrow floral border in silk or gold. Here again you find the use of soft shades often shot in double colours and with two bands in white and colour for pallav.

The Baluchars of Bengal which had disappeared but have been revived by the Handicrafts Board, are made in thick silk in dark shades with floral or foliage border, mango for the pallav which is formed with breadthwise

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bands to form a rectangle with compartments. At times in addition, however, whole historical scenes are depicted showing certain periods of influences, in the compartments in the pallav. Sometimes, a temple or an image is also shown or Moghul and Rajput scenes.

The South Indian sarees are a class by themselves, both in silk as in delicate cottons. The silk ones are heavy with broad borders and elaborate pallavs, which are usually in contrasting colours, but together they make a harmonious colour scheme. The designs are very varied and show an almost endless range. The body is plain, or has stripes or big checks, or little buds subtly interspersed throughout. The colours are the typical dark Indian shades. Kanchipuram in Madras State, Arni, Armoor, Dharmavaram in Andhra Pradesh, Kollegal, Mollakarmura in Mysore State are amongst the best known. In Madras, at Adyar, Kalakshetra, a cultural centre, has specialised in traditional designs. In cottons, Gadwal, Kothakota, Venkatagiri are excellent and delicately woven and some as fine as gossamer. The

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first two have heavy gold borders and pallavs with cotton body, while the latter has very delicate designs in silk and gold of flowers, parrots etc. on a thin cotton white background. Trivandrum in Kerala has superfine cottons with broad plain bright gold borders and pallavs, sometimes thin broad gold checks, but mostly plain body.

The Irkal sarees of Karnatak in Mysore State are a very different style. They are in dark Indian shades with red borders with small white designs and large bands in white and red for the pallav, resembling the Maheshwari a little. The body may be plain, in close stripes or double checks. Shahpur also in Mysore State, weave in Irkal style, but in soft pastel shades and lovely shots.

Then there are the Bandhanis or tie-dye fabrics of Kutch, Saurashtra, Rajasthan and Madurai in Madras State. The tie-dye is an elaborate process of tying the fabric in various knots, dying each set in one shade to get

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a particular design which is either geometrical or scenic with figures or dances.

Batik is another ancient art which originally travelled from India to Indonesia and, when it died in India, was brought back from that country. The original Indian technique in which textiles were covered with clay, gum, wax or resin before dyeing the fabric, was elaborated by the Indonesians, giving the cloth a very distinctive character. This art was first revived in Santiniketan in India but has now spread and there are a few centres where batik is done.

This is a long and rather complicated process. The cloth has to be first washed clean of starch and boiled to remove the surface dressing for the design to be traced on it. Two kinds of wax are mixed and heated to liquidity and spread over those parts which are to remain white with a brush. This is repeated on the reverse side also. When it sets, the cloth is dyed. There are two characteristics of batik which make it unusual. The most unique is the cracks or marbling which appear in the process of dyeing when the darker colours seep through the cracks in the wax onto the lighter background. The other is the bold intricate shapes which seem to stand up from the fabric. South East Asia has tried to get the batik effect more cheaply by applying wax designs on the cloth, through a handblock to produce cheaper batik. Handmade batik is rather expensive. But except in Indonesia itself, where some good effects are obtained, in other countries the results have been crude and often ugly. It is best to remember that handmade batik cannot really be duplicated. It has a character and dream-like loveliness all its own.

Then there are numerous types of Indian textiles from the heavy brocaded Himroo to the delicately brocaded Tanehoi.

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EMBROIDERY

EMBROIDERY is obviously a very ancient craft in India for it is referred to in the Vedas and the Indian epics. Needlework seems to have been considered as an important craft and the needle became a symbol of strength for it joined pieces together, and figures in some of the ancient invocations. Like in so many other crafts, the peasants and the tribals, especially the migratory ones, have contributed a great deal to the development of embroidery. Because embroidery is an art of leisure, being time consuming, and peasants have whole seasons when their hands are not too occupied. So also with migratory tribes who are not tied to any special routine chores. Probably the sewing of gold and silver thread on fabrics was the earliest specimen of embroidery work. Gems and other precious metals were also used. Later beads, glass pieces, shells and similar cheaper type of decorative substitutes were introduced to suit the less affluent classes. It is even suggested that such complicated weaves like Kinkhabs, Patolas, Himroo and even designs in bandhanis were patterned on the ancient embroidery. It would probably be no exaggeration to say that practically every known type of embroidery prevalent in any country exists in India. Nevertheless the way stitches have been used in the Indian embroidery impart to it a distinct Indian character to

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make it typically indigenous. Inspiration is mainly taken from nature, and local legends and mythology are drawn upon, as also religious motifs.

Probably the best known of Indian embroidery is the Kasida of Kashmir. The designs are dominated by the landscape, the flora and fauna which seems but natural, with a profusion of colours. These designs display all the charm of free hand drawing and composition. While the stitches are

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simple enough, the chief being the satin, the stem and the chain, with occasional use of the herring-bone and the darning stitch the thread used being silk or wool. Of course, the best embroidery is revealed in the shawls, the most elegant and distinguished of warps. It is literally a cottage industry done by several members of a family in their hamlet, largely in and around Srinagar. Since this reflects largely the landscape of this lovely region, the designs are naturally very beautiful and hardly surpassed in excellence. Kasida is variously classified under special names. The *rafugari* which means darning, derives the name from the stitch and is usually done on scarves or small shawls, and the designs are simple though attractive. It is worked with the same type of material as that of the base, the interweaving producing a beautiful texture in the fabric. The other stitches are known as Zalakdozi, Vata-chikan, Doria, Talaikar. Namda is an important and popular part of Kashmir embroidery. The base is a mixture of wool and cotton pressed into a fabric like felt on which stitches of a large chain variety are used to produce the designs. Another equally popular item is the Gubba, centred mainly around the town of Anantnag. Here the base uses up waste wool and torn shawls and other tattered woollen garments, which are thrashed and dyed into various colours. On this background applique work is done using the torn pieces to excellent advantage by sewing them in chain stitch. The finished product can be used as a rug, a diwan cover, a coverlet, and is quite attractive with designs in rich colours or floral patterns. Then there is the tapestry or the chain stitch of more recent introduction. This is comparatively much cheaper for the base is hessian cloth and the embroidery done with ordinary wool. Here too the usual Kashmir designs are reproduced.

Phulkari is embroidery peculiar to the Punjab though it is also found in parts of Rajasthan and a version of it in Chamba in Himachal Pradesh. Like weaving in Assam, in Punjab embroidery forms an important part of a bridal dress and the trousseau. It is said that when a daughter was born, the mother started work on the Phulkari piece for her wedding dress for it had to be a rare work of art. The base in this is thick coarse cloth and the motifs are floral or geometrical with a predominance of orange, yellow, cream, maroon with streaks of green or crimson or purple or other shades. Traditionally it is meant for large pieces such as chaddars, bed covers, though now the stitch

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is being used for ornamenting table linen. The motifs are made up of horizontal, vertical and diagonal stitches, producing a geometrical pattern. The design is worked out on the reverse side of the cloth with strands of various shapes and sizes and colour combinations, of untwisted silk which gives it a smooth silken sheen. Originally the embroidery covered almost the entire base, and in a way became the fabric itself. But the modern trend is also to use the Phulkari stitch just to embroider any linen. And although the darning stitch and the geometrical patterns seem inseparable in Phulkari, the range of designs is very wide and often quite intricate.

Along with the Phulkari, two other varieties of stitches are used, one is chobe which is used for embroidering the edges of the cloth to produce a matching border. Literally it means garden. The other is Bagh and is very elaborate and picturesque and has a fair number of varieties such as Shalimar Bagh, Kakri Bagh, Mircha Bagh, Dhunia Bagh according to the motifs used, and judging from the names and the patterns, they are of objects of common use such as vegetable and flowers. As Phulkari embroidery is done with very great care and fastidiousness with strict adherence to certain set formulae, and is a time consuming product, each piece becomes a real heirloom like rare lace in Europe, handed down from generation to generation.

Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujerat State and parts of Rajasthan have perhaps the most decorative, colourful and ornamental embroidery. There is a close resemblance in the embroideries of these regions though each is distinctive. In Kutch its typical variety has the chain stitch as its base. Much of it is plain embroidery, producing flowers and birds and sometimes figures in very vivid colours. It is called Kanbi since it is made by Kanbis, the cultivators; sometimes it is also made by Ahirs, the cowherds, a pastoral tribe. Originally, and it is largely true even today, the embroidery was done by these rural folk on their own garments in their leisure hours and not for sale. The Kutch embroidery is very fine and has a special delicacy. A hooklike crochet needle is used to speed the work, with the thread introduced from beneath the cloth. Sometimes mirror pieces or jewels are also sewn in. In the Saurashtra work, the base is sometimes of a combination of embroidery with strips of materials sewn together to form little panels. In the stitches

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one finds in addition to chain stitch, the herring bone interlaced. Here again mirror pieces, shells and jewels are embroidered in. Parts of Gujerat proper specialise in mirror work. Shoes are also embroidered and sometimes designs embossed with wire.

The articles on which the embroidery work is done are almost the same in every region. The wearing apparel like the large skirts, the *choli* or small blouse, the wrap which comes over the head, canopies, panels over the doors, wall decorations, *rumals* or large kerchiefs, *natis* or children's caps ending in a square flap at the back. The *Toran* or panel over the doorway is very charming and is supposed to welcome guests. It consists of long embroidered flaps or bits of patterned cloth decorating the lower edges of the pelmet. *Ghagras* or skirts too have these flaps sewn on to make the skirt hang on folds. Some of the most gorgeous specimens are the trappings for animals: bullocks, horse, elephants. Sometimes the pomp and pageantry of royalty and courts are also depicted when a large cloth is to be worked on.

The Karnatak areas of Mysore are famous for a beautiful style known as Kasuti. It seems that this found patronage under Chalukya and Vijayanagar rulers. Some of these attractive embroidery patterns were reproduced on the loom largely for *Khanns* i.e., blouse pieces. One place Guladagudda only produce these *Khanns*.

The motifs commonly used in Kasuti are objects of common use, like flowers, birds and animals. Sometimes temples, palanquins and religious symbols are also used. Each design has a name and every object has wide variations; for instance, the lotus is shown in a dozen different patterns, so also each bird and animal, the cradle, palanquin, anklet bells, conch shells, lamps etc. Each is normally multicoloured and done in silk thread. Some are in geometrical patterns and produce kaleidoscopic effect. The stitches are of four types: *Gavanti* or the line and back stitch, *Negi* or running stitch, *Menthi* or cross stitch, *Murgi* or zigzag running stitch. Gavanti is the most common and both the sides should be similar to be perfect. Curved lines are usual in this. Negi produces the woven effect. Menthi is used to thicken a background.

Bearing a close resemblance to the Kasuti, is the Kashida of Bihar also worked only by women. Like in Kasuti, Kashida is made to depict

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geometrical patterns, birds, flowers, animals. The range in designs is wider, as also in variety of colours. For Kashida is still a very live art especially in North Bihar where the women decorate every garment or linen used in the house with Kashida. It is, however, not commercialised, and made only for personal use. The designs are worked very delicately in rich colours and produce a stunning effect.

Delicate embroidery is also done in North Bihar on quilts, *Suznis* as they are called. Here they closely resemble the Kantha of Bengal.

Extremely delicate and very suggestive, in plain spotless white is the chicken embroidery of Uttar Pradesh, especially of Lucknow. It dates a good many years back to the reign of Emperor Harsha who was said to wear fine muslin garments embroidered with patterns like geese, having no colour or ornamentation to embellish it. Chikan has to rely entirely on its own to prove attractive. Like in sculpture, Chikan has to depend on form to produce varying motifs and combinations. It does not also employ too many varieties of stitches. It mainly uses the satin-hole stitch, the stem stitch, the back stitch, the herring-bone stitch and the bottom-hide stitch. The simplest is the Taipichi which consists of strokes or straight lines in the desired direction to form designs, and is usually employed for outlines or running designs. The Bhukia is the most intricate and is like the shadow work. The stitches cover the back of the cloth on the style of the herring-bone, to produce an opaque effect on the surface of the fine white fabric, working at the same time an outline of motif of flowers and leaves with minute stitches resembling the strokes of the back stitches. There is an imitation of this, called Khatao, using a kind of applique to produce opacity and requisitions some ordinary stitch for the outline. To get a rich heavy emboss effect, a knotted variety is done known as *Murri* and *Phanda* to resemble grains like rice and millet. Then there is *jali* work or netting. This is done by breaking up the fabric into holes and tightening them to suit the pattern and to give the cloth the appearance of a net. There are various specimens in this, some intricate and some elaborate. This speciality of white embroidery on white muslin has a unique elegance and dignity all its own.

Of almost equal delicacy but much rarer is the Kantha of Bengal, worked only by women. The background is strange. Discarded sarees are arranged

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one on the top of the other to the required thickness, with the edges folded in. The field is filled in with fine quilting work by means of a white thread, and coloured threads drawn from the borders of the old sarees are stitched along the border line and the surface is filled in with different designs. The design is, however, traced before the quilting is made, and where the linen shows in the design is unquilted and held in place by embroidery stitches. The chief stitches used are darning, satin, loop, and for the outlines, stem and spilt. Kanthas are made for different purposes. *Lep*, thickly quilted to keep the body warm in the winter, *Sarjni*, large and rectangular, for ceremonial purposes. *Baytan* used as wraps for valuables, books etc., are usually square with wide borders of rows of human or animal figures, a lotus in the centre and the corners covered by trees, flowers, or leaves. Oar is used for pillow covers, with trees and birds or a number of longitudinal border patterns and sometimes an extra decorative border round the edges. *Arsilata*, wrap for mirrors and combs, coveted with creepers, lotuses or trees. *Durjani*, also known as *Thalia*, is a wallet cover, a square piece with embroidered border and a lotus in the centre. *Rumal*, kerchief, smaller square in size with a central lotus and a variety of motifs grouped round it. In the ritual designs there are different varieties, best known being *Mandala* and *Kalasa*. These are usually done for religious feasts and in fulfilment of vows. *Mandala* has a hundred petalled lotus, *Satadala Padma*, surrounded by several concentric rings of different thread work, circumscribed by pots, the *Kalasas* or by conch shells, the *Sankhas*. Another style of Kantha has a border with repeating design, similar to a saree border, done in darning stitch, giving it almost a weave appearance. Where the stitch is of considerable length, it is broken one or more times by making a short stitch on the reverse, giving a dotted appearance. Thus while the former type of Kantha is *dorukha*—that is same on both sides—in the latter the forms and designs which appear on one face are complimentary to those on the other. The special significance of the Kantha quilt is not only in its artistic elegance but its vivid narration of legends and tales of heroism. They are wrought with such fineness and dexterity that no one would dream that it is quilting.

Little known and not in the market is the Chamba embroidery, from a remote resort in the south-western ranges of the Himalayas. It is part of

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the region which was once noted for the exquisite style of Pahari or Kangra school of painting. This embroidery is really a transcription of the paintings in stitch. They depict scenes from Krishna Leela, Ras dances, ancient legends, the ragas and raginis, in fact, all the subjects covered by the Pahari paintings. This embroidery is unique in that it has succeeded in depicting movement which the sweep of a brush can show in a painting. The embroidery has the same vivid colours of the Pahari paintings and look a riot of colour, but very pleasing to the eye because of its subtle blending. Traditionally this embroidery has been confined only to Rumals--kerchiefs, but has immense possibilities of being used on many types of linen.

The peasant women of Haryana and the rural areas around Delhi have a style of their own. Against dark rust or blue-black background, the work is done usually in yellow thread, and while it has a superficial resemblance to Phulkari, it is different. The stitches are smaller and more delicate and the whole of the cloth is not covered. The designs are mostly geometrical and there is no riot of colours, but more sober use of them.

Manipur has its own unique embroidery. It is done on the border of the cloth which is worn by the women like a lungi. This is a woven piece, dark stripes against a light background, or a plain background in a dark shade, over which the embroidery is made, also in a dark matching shade. The colour usually is dark red, plum, or chocolate. The embroidery is very fine and has a delicate chiselled appearance, and at a glance seems part of the weave. It is done to decorate the wearing apparel.

The tribal embroidery is a world by itself. The most gorgeous effects are produced both in silk stitches as well as by the use of mirrors, shells, beads, metallic pieces etc. Fine designs are also worked in applique. The edges are decorated by tassels or cheap jewellery. The Lamanis and the Banjaras are famous throughout India for their rich costume. The ordinary satin stitch and the herring-bone variety are commonly used. Very outstanding is the embroidery done by the Todas of the Nilgiris. It is flat and has a sculpturesque effect. It is always done on the long white cloth which they wear, one end being elaborately decorated in geometrical patterns, in dark shades of red, black, deep blue or blue-black.

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Among the outstanding and famous of Indian embroidery, and probably the earliest, is gold and silver work. From the Vedas down to the epics there are elaborate references to this art, known as *Karchob*. This is divided into two main categories, *Zardozi*, the heavy and elaborate, and *Kamdani*, the lighter and simpler kind. This is used to lend a dazlling appearance to the fabric. The material used is thread of gold or silver, thin strips of metal known as *Badla*, and spangles. They are generally produced in the same place where the embroidery is done. Banaras, Surat, Rajkot, Ajmer, Agra, Delhi, Bhopal are well known for this type of work. Designs of flowers or birds, animals, of architecture, are common.

Many of the stitches used are the same as found in other embroideries. The laid stitch or couching, is important as it is suited to gold thread, generally of divan covers, small carpets, and cushion covers. The chain stitch is used on sarees and the satin stitch for borders, caps and articles requiring heavy embroidery. The running stitch lends itself to finer and net like fabrics. In addition there are various types of laces, braids, floral pieces, used as appendages in dress, which are offshoots. Spangles serve the same purpose as mirrors or beads. Done in pure metal, these decorations withstand superbly the ravages of time.

Embroidery is also done on leather, felt, and velvet. These are mostly done on vests, caps, shoes, bags, saddles, trappings, coverings for bullocks, horses, camels and carts. The most common and popular are footwear, caps and handbags which are embroidered in silk and metal thread.

Closely associated with embroidery is applique work. It is principally worked in two ways: In broad patterns and masses as on canopies, carpets, flags, umbrellas. In the other, narrow strips like ribbons round a design are used in costumes, and pillow covers etc.

Applique work can be very stunning and produce startling effects and are found in almost infinite designs. Some of the most outstanding are done by tribals who have their own unique designs. Applique is done in Orissa, Saurashtra, Bihar, Ahmedabad, Kashmir, and Bengal.

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CARPETS

CARPETS are one of the items for which India is noted. They are made usually in cotton and wool and in some places in silk and velvet. They are manufactured all over the country though not so universally as fabrics, and represent some of the most ancient ornamental designs of India, some say even earlier than the immigration of the Aryans. It is believed that carpets originated in embroidery and that carpets were first used for hangings and palls. There used to be a great demand for such hangings in churches and in many of the old paintings by Italian masters in churches, the oriental carpets are depicted.

It is presumed that the pile carpet was introduced by the Saracens into India probably from Persia. They are known as *Kalin* or *Kalicha*. The foundation for the carpet is a warp of the requisite number of strong cotton or henpen threads, according to the breadth of the carpet, and the typical process consists in dexterously twisting short lengths of the coloured wool into each of the threads of the warp so that the two ends of the twist of the coloured wool stick out in front. When a whole line of the warp is completed the projecting ends of the wool are clipped to a uniform level and a single thread of wool is run across the breadth of the carpet, between the

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threads of the warp, just as in ordinary weaving, and the threads of the warp are crossed as usual; then another thread of the warp is fixed with twists of wool in the same manner; and again a single thread of wool is run between the threads of the warp, across the carpet, serving also to keep the tags of wool upright and so on to the end. The lines of work are further compacted together by striking them with a blunt fork, really a kind of a comb and called in fact a *Kangi* or comb. Sometimes the carpet is till further strengthened by striking the tags of wool to the warp, after which the surface is clipped all over again to complete the carpet. The design is not drawn but written out in descriptive words which are recited by the weavers like a chant as they ply. The idea is to enable the weavers to concentrate completely on the weave to work out the detailed intricacies without distraction—what the weaver murmurs with his lips he transfers to the loom. Kashmir is noted for its carpets of high quality. The designs, like in all Kashmiri carpets, have large Persian influence and a local blend has been worked out which characterises

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it as Kashmir design. It also makes many Central Asian designs such as from Bokhara, Samarkand, Turkistan, Yarkand, Khurdistan, as also the pure Persian designs. The Persian influence has brought a profusion of flowers, fruits, birds, and trees. Badhoi and Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, are big centres for carpets, mainly for export. Many of them are made in plain pastel shades or with special designs for each different market. Warangal in Andhra Pradesh has a very old carpet industry with its own special designs, stately and attractive. They were once a marvel of weaving, said to have 400 knots to every square inch, giving a total of 3,500,000 for the entire surface and in such complicated pattern as to make it necessary to change the needle for every knot. In the *Tarai* area near Almora in Uttar Pradesh, beautiful carpets are made in geometrical patterns or dragons indicating strong Tibetan influence. In the South the cotton and silk ones are popular and are made in Mysore and Madras States. Notable amongst them are the cotton rugs of Navalgund with unique designs in bright colours. The silk rugs made in Salem in Madras State, mostly in stripes of bright colours, are very distinctive. Eluru in Andhra Pradesh has also a distinctive carpet which has a strong Persian influence even though it is far down South.

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JEWELLERY

ONE of the crafts India is greatly noted for is jewellery. The variety has perhaps no parallels. Each little region has its own. In composition they range from gold to grass, from ivory to flowers. The very wide range of patterns, styles and composition is beyond enumeration in a booklet of this kind and calls for a volume of its own to have any justice done to it.

It may be roughly divided into the archaic ornaments worn by the tribals and rural folk and the stylised ones used by the town and city dwellers. At one time, not very long ago, jewels were worn by men and women alike but they were distinctly different.

The elaborate but exquisitely designed jewels found on the clay figurines tell of the lavishness and care bestowed on ornamentation of the body, beginning with the hair down to toes. Round the neck were a complex array of necklaces starting with a choker round the throat followed by larger ones reaching down to the waist. The ears were covered by ornaments, some conical, while on the wrists and arms were bangles, bracelets, armlets of infinite designs. These figurines give us a most entrancing glimpse of the heights attained in jewellery-making in those ancient days. The ornaments discovered, of gold and silver, in excavations, reveal fine workmanship and

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some of them are to be found to the present day. Even the names have not changed very much. One can also trace the similarity of these to the figures in the frescoes of Ajanta or the sculptures of Amaravati. We see in them men and women profusely decked with ornaments and include almost every conceivable type of body decoration. This has in fact continued to the present day, though in the case of men they are restricted to a few occasions, like bridegrooms at marriages or Maharajas on festival days. Descriptions of the rulers of those days in chronicles speak of great lavishness. A pen picture of Jehangir by Sir Thomas Roe says: "On his head he wore a rich turban on one side of which hung a ruby as big as a walnut; on the other a diamond as great; in the middle an emerald like a heart, but much bigger. His sash was wreathed about with diamonds; on his wrist three rows of several sorts. His hands bare, but almost on every finger a ring".

The reproduction in silver and gold of a large variety of flowers, sun, moon and stars, was largely meant for the hair. The plaited hair in a long tail was also covered by gold or silver flower-shaped medallions or by an imitation of a cobra with the hood at the top. The armlet would also sometimes take the shape of a coiled snake with a raised hood or a mat-like circle set with a large flower. The patterns in ear-rings are too numerous for description, so also bracelets, bangles, nose rings and necklaces. Waist belts were beautiful works of art, some going straight round the waist, others slung loosely forming a charming girdle. A special feature of a style in bracelet is not completing the circle and carving the ends into lion, fish or elephant heads facing each other. The flat bands of the head ornament ended in a peacock's head with all details in brilliant enamel. A ring which needs a special mention is set with a mirror nestling in gold or silver filigree and surrounded by pearls. The anklets too showed a very wide range from plain circles in silver or gold, with embossed work to elaborate ones, strung with little bells or woven in thin mat designs or thin ropes twisted into circles, sometimes hollow containing some shots which tinkled when the wearer moved about. Then came toe-rings, shaped like fish, flower, heart and so on. Besides jewels round the wrist, a jewel covered the back of the hand and went on to the fingers.

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With the advent of the Muslims, several new trends crept in, the most unique amongst them being fine enamelling on jewellery. The front of the ornament was hollowed and set with precious stones held in place by a band of purest gold, known as *Kundan* work. The back of it was enamelled in beautiful flowers, birds, animals making each a miniature art. Necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings were all made in *Kundan* style with enamelling on the back. Where the front was enamelled it was plain, being set at intervals, with diamonds or crystals. In some of the hill valleys like Kangra, vitreous enamel was applied to small silver ornaments like finger and toe-rings, hair and ear jewels. The nose ring was in the shape of crescent set with pearls or precious stones, a gold flower or a plain mounted one.

One other speciality of this period especially round Delhi was the crustation of jade with patterns whose stem work is in gold and the leaves and flowers in garnets, rubies and other precious stones.

Jewelled ornamentation spread also to other articles such as combs, hilts and scabbard of swords and daggers, key rings, mouthpieces of *hukkas*, heads of walking sticks, *pan* boxes, trinket cases, mirrors, goblets and a host of other things.

Much of this jewellery is still made and universally used.

One of the finest specimens in jewellery is filigree, usually made in very thin silver, sometimes in gold which creates a soft foamy appearance, and has a delicate fairy like appearance. It is said that this spiderweb—like fine manufacture was too sensitive for adult hands and therefore, children were employed to manipulate the silver threads with the necessary accuracy and rapidity. Cuttack in Orissa, Karimnagar in Andhra, Murshidabad in West Bengal are all well known for filigree. The very traditional, stylised and not folk, shows the art mostly in raised figures on metal often from Indian epics like Krishna, Laxmi, Saraswati, Ganesh, Kartikeya etc. and flowers like the lotus, chrysanthemum and jasmine.

Gem engraving, an immemorial Eastern art, was also popular and precious stones were cut in various shapes and designs. Delhi and Lucknow were once noted for this work. Unique has also been the gem-encrusted jade, today priceless. While Chinese craftsmen had cut jade from early times, it was the adventure of the Indians that made the emerald as a

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perfect background for mounting precious stones and to encrust them on jade.

Silver jewellery has always been popular with rural people and tribals. The town and city people rarely used silver except on the feet as they regarded that gold would be degraded by its transference to the feet. Silver is currently becoming popular mainly because of the high price of gold.

The controversy on the origin of enamelling in India has never been settled. Some claim that it came from China, while others point to Persia. Whatever the source may be, the Indian craftsmen developed this technique to a degree which an authority like Birdwood claims as "matchless perfection". Its flowering age was the Moghul period, particularly Akbar's reign. According to Abul Fazal, Akbar who was greatly interested in the arts and the sciences, had a special department in the crafts workshops for enamelling. Later it was introduced into Jaipur and came to its finest flowering, especially under Maharaja Jai Singh, the founder of Jaipur. Many more colours were added to the enamelling with brilliant results and Jaipur became and has continued as the most outstanding centre for this unique art. Three techniques in enamelling are followed. The oldest form is encrustation and has two varieties, one that is commonly known as cloissonne in which the pattern is raised on the surface of the metal by metal strips or wire welded on to it. The other for which Jaipur is noted is *Champleve*, in which depressions to hold the enamel are engraved from the surface, narrow walls being left to separate the colours. Here the bottom of each depression is ridged to allow the enamel to grip the metal and also to reflect light through the translucent enamel and increase the fire. The pigment is then painted in and fired, normally each colour being done separately and in the order of the resistance strength of each colour, the least resistant like red being treated last. Such a laborious and delicate task called for indefinite time and infinite patience and naturally raised the cost of the article making real good pieces almost fabulous. Birdwood speaks of the finest monument of this art in the form of a round plate which took four years to complete. Such plates were covered with various deisgns, human figures especially Krishna and the Gopis, animals, birds, flowers, even hills, dales and meadows with cows. There is also an illustration of a *Kalamdan* shaped like an Indian Gondola, in which the stern is carved

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as a peacock, the tail sweeping under the boat irradiating it with blues, greens, turquoises and coral-like shafts of flames. There are bowls carved out of solid emeralds and rubies, more lustrous and transparent than the stones themselves. Thus enamelling found great favour with all who could afford it for its brilliance and superb workmanship. The mingled lustre of a dozen colours laid on gold that lent this its unusual irridescence, proved irresistible.

Of the other styles, that of Partapgarh deserves mention. It is not considered strictly enamelling but quasi. It consists of pictorial scenes in gold upon a flat background of a green or blue enamel plaque, backed with foil and set in a gold or silver mount. The scenes are either from Indian epics or of hunting, sometimes birds and flowers also. The plaques strung together or used singly to serve as effective jewels or trinklets. Later styles are simpler, one where the enamel is applied to the metal as paint is applied to canvas, the other where translucent enamels are laid over a design which has been etched on or hammered out of the metal.

Enamelling spread over Rajasthan and later to Lucknow, Banaras, the Kangla and Kashmir. Enamel articles are still very popular as boxes, plates tumblers, handles, cups, spoons, goblets and a host of such utility articles, and of course very highly rated in jewellery and in fact have few equals. No wonder Birdwood classes this as the "master art craft of the world".

Closely allied with it is glass, particularly as enamelling in glass in imitation of the precious stones gave it a unique position. Glass was known to Indians from very early times, as remote as the Mahabharta period in which there are references to glass. Kashmir enamelling is a good example of this, especially in *hukka* and goblet.

Glass is very universally used, the most popular form being beads and bangles. In fact they have come to have a ritualistic significance, for black beads and bangles are symbols of good omen for women. The glass ornaments are found in brilliant hues as well as in delicate shades. Indian women have great fancy for bangles and beads. As a matter of fact, in the rural area, glass beads are used as ornaments or for luck even by men. Animals are also profusely decorated with large flashing glass necklaces or ornaments for horns. Bead jewellery seems to have reached high excellence in the Harappa civilization, where the beads were made from a wide variety of

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material, from terracotta and stone to Cornelian and Lapis-lazali. Infinite varieties of tapestries, screens, door decorations, fans, purses, and slippers are made out of beads. Saurashtra, Kutch, Gujerat are still noted for very exquisite articles of beads. In Gujerat to this day, the hollow rest for carrying pots on the head are made of beads and still used. The decorations for the cradle to capture and hold the child's attention were made of brilliant coloured beads in the shape of birds, animals, and faces. In fact bead work is an art by itself. Bead embroidery on textiles is still very popular especially on sarees and blouses. India was at one time noted for its very lovely phials, especially for *attar*, scents. They were made in beautiful shapes, tinted in different shades and decorated with gold lines or small designs. At marriages and festive occasions, these phials were given away to guests filled with aromatic scents of the season. At present glass animals, made as cottage industry products, are widely sold. Fabulous and yet still in use are the very lovely beads made from rubies, emeralds, sapphires and strung into necklaces. Jaipur is the main centre for it.

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MATS-BASKETRY

MATMAKING and basketry are amongst the most ancient of Indian crafts, because of the very nature of their composition and use. Like clayware these have been an indispensable and integral part of the household. These were, however, gradually made into beautiful works of art while maintaining their utility.

The raw material in both cases can be grass, reeds or bamboo. In basketry it may be either woven or coiled. In the woven, the pattern is made up of strands of the warp in a more or less fixed position, while the weft crosses and recrosses. Into this simple process, however, a great wealth of beauty and colour is introduced through varied designs and dyes. Sometimes these are decorated by beads or shells. In coiled basketry the foundation is first laid by coiling the cane round a central core at the base, and built up spirally, gradually widening the diameter of each until the desired height and form is attained.

These baskets vary in size and delicacy depending on their use. Normally they are used for grain, fruits, vegetables or carrying any merchandise, for picking leaves and fruits, for garbage and a hundred other articles. The finer varieties are used for flowers, fruits and sweets, in the kitchen and at table, and sometimes as caskets even for jewels.

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Where thatched roofs and leaves are used, aesthetic designs and different shapes are introduced to give them an artistic appearance so that vitality and aesthetics are combined with originality and practical vision to make the house something more than a shell of four walls and a roof and a thing of real beauty.

Like basketry, matmaking is pretty universal all over the country. Mats are woven of grasses, reeds, cane strips and palm leaves. Here again finesse and colour lend a superb quality to this common artiele. Some mats are well noted like the Pattamadai of Madras State, which are fine enough to be used as fabric. The screwpine mats in ivory white from Kerala have a shine and lustre and lend themselves to be made into many useful objects for they are very soft and pliable. Bengal is known for the Sitalpatti mats with their gloss and delicacy of texture. The mats carry also designs, sometimes geometrical and sometimes fauna, flora and even human figures. At one time, they used also to be ornamented with ivory strips and bead. In a few places very delicate ivory mats are still made.

Bamboo is one of the most luxuriant and decorative of nature's gifts to man. Somewhat like the cocoanut palm, it serves a variety of purposes. It adds beauty, lends coolness and shade to the grounds. Its shoots are eaten as delicacy, and used in medicine for their healing properties. As a whole it is used for a large variety of things from thatching a roof and covering the floor, to fashionable hand-bags, bowls and mugs and even furniture. In fact, its uses are infinite and at a pinch a whole household it seems can be fitted up by bamboo. Perhaps many are not aware that the bamboo has an interesting historical background, specially because of its being closely woven in with Buddhism and its growth and wider ramifications. This fact proves that the bamboo was an honoured tree in this country long before the sophisticated Japanese bamboo articles were introduced to us. Apart from the many utility articles that can be fashioned out of the bamboo, its chips like pith have long been in use in this country for decoration and they show off the same delicacy and texture as the ivory at a glance. In fact, it would need a treatise in itself to highlight the service this multi-purpose plant renders and how it holds its natural place and dignity and status of respect in the world of crafts.

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WOODWORK

WOODWORK, like many other crafts, has a very old tradition, for it is mentioned in the Rig Veda and subsequent ancient books. In Sanskrit, the wood worker is referred to as a Sutradhar, literally 'the man who holds the strings', that is a key man. The Silpa Sastra, a treatise on arts and crafts, gives full directions not only on the making of wooden articles and carvings, but even on the selection of trees for felling and for seasoning.

Woodwork and woodcarving has been pretty widespread in India. Wooden boxes and chests, dolls, toys, masks, vessels, musical instruments, boats etc. are very common. Architectural wood works in old houses and temples are monumental. The most elaborate carvings with a rich profusion of design are to be found in the temple chariots and other vehicles used for religious processions. They are covered minutely all over by figures and designs. Some are carved in large figures like the lion, swan, bull etc. In houses and temples, pillars, doors, windows, ceilings, roofs were exquisitely carved. The work was either relief or flat or sculptural.

In the wooden articles the most common are dolls and toys made all over the country. But some have become well known because of their unique character or beauty. In Andhra colourful toys of light wood are made in

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Kodapally while Tirupati makes religious figures carved out of red wood and Nirmal makes not only toys but other articles also brightly coloured and ornamental. In Bengal and Bihar, only the outline of the doll or toy is hewn out, the rest is done by painting. Banaras makes mostly animals, also painted, but fully covered. In some places the woodwork is lacquered, like in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore. A large variety of utility articles are also made, such as bowls, vases, plates, and brightly lacquered to give them a rich look. A very traditional item in this is legs for beds and divans, which are beautifully carved and coloured and sold by themselves.

Another style of treating is binding or covering wooden boxes and chests with brass carvings or bands. This is well known in the South, particularly Kerala. Saurashtra also makes large wooden chests, but lacquers them in a variety of designs.

Exquisite wood carving on objects of current use is done on walnut in Kashmir and rosewood in Kerala and Madras State. Each has its own distinctive style and design. Gujerat was once very noted especially for structural carvings and one can still walk through the old streets of some of its towns and see superb carving on the houses. Later the carvings were introduced into Western style furniture. Tribal people in many places have their own style of carvings, and decorate their dwellings, as also make toys and dolls, very distinctive in design and colour.

The role of cottage industries in the economy of the country that is building up its industrial structure anew after its freedom, like India and other Asian countries, has come to assume world-wide importance. Economists all over the globe have turned their vision and experience to this study. Several organisations in the United Nations like the UNESCO, FAO, ILO have sections that deal with the promotion and development of handicrafts. There is fair unanimity on the conclusion that the industrialisation of the Asian countries has to be on a different pattern and largely through smaller industrial units and establishments.

In modern economy large scale industries supported by smaller ones represent prosperity for a country and a high standard of living for its people. But for regions whose natural potential has not been developed or deliberately retarded as in colonial and semi-colonial countries, causing

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vast unemployment and depressing the standards of living, at least one of the answers is many small scale industries. Moreover, where there is abundant labour but little easy capital for investment, particular care has to be taken to employ its limited funds in such a way as to obtain maximum productivity and profit. In small industries the capital cost per unit of production is generally low and the ratio of productivity per unit of capital higher. Small amounts for investment are easier to raise. Moreover, in a predominantly rural economy where capital formation is slow and laborious and savings is mostly sunk in agriculture and investment is still calculated in terms of land, people are generally not ready to risk their meagre hard earned savings in what seems a gamble, like remote industrial enterprises which they can neither see nor visualise. But they are more willing to join a local industry that they can see and understand and above all has an assured place in their everyday life and the village economy.

The number of unemployed is always larger in the less developed countries. Unfortunately improvement in agriculture methods instead of decreasing really adds to the number of unemployed. In addition agriculture being a seasonal occupation has to depend on supplementary industries to ensure the population even a nominal living standard.

Underdeveloped areas also present other problems. Transport facilities and general lines of communication are few and slow. These are different factors that aid in the growth of industry and commerce. Small industries manufactured largely if not wholly out of raw material locally obtainable and the finished goods consumed easily in the industry's neighbourhood brighten the prospects of success for any small industrial enterprise. The high transportation costs as also the usual bottlenecks in free and quick movements are avoided, if the industry is closely integrated as possible to the local economy.

Within the last generation there has been a rapid transformation in the social fabric of the country. The building of roads, the introduction of machines, the breakdown of caste barriers, the bringing of an urban civilisation through the radio and the cinema to the door of the rural unit, have led to a rapid change of the norms that had evolved craft traditions. Today it is the town that is dictating the fashions and in some village fairs the clothes that are sold are no longer the resist or tie-dyed clothes produced by the local craftsmen, but the latest design woven by the nearby textile mill.

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The snapping of the link between the creative impulse and livelihood, that is the inevitable outcome of mechanisation; and the introduction of an alien concept of designer as distinct from the craftsman has only destroyed further the craftsman's natural response to good form. This has led to increasing tensions in the craft tradition and a confusion in the unconscious background that is the very source of the creative process. That it has happened accidentally and not from a conscious awareness of the situation has only tended to produce greater chaos. The Indian craftsman is faced

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with a situation where on the one hand he hears the cry 'back to the past' or 'break with the past', produce something new, and on the other hand he is dazzled by the incomprehensible forms evolved by the West after decades of experimentation. To go wholly back to the past is impossible, for the past was a background of life that has less and less significance in terms of the new social order. Equally to absorb the Western forms has no meaning, for they are alien and have no link with the craftsman's comprehensions and concepts. What then is possible? The question has no easy solution. It may well be that the very laying bare of the problem with all its intricacies, conflicts and tensions will itself project the answer. No single human mind can mould the unconscious impulses of a craft tradition; what it can do is to help cleanse the eye of the craftsman of the corrupt forms that have blurred his vision and leave it to the unfailing creative force that still lies deeply embedded within the craftsman's eyes and hands to dictate and create a new tradition.

As one looks upon the traditional craft products, one sees awe-inspiring beauty, expressing a vision and variety of force and feeling which has few parallels in the art treasures of the world. Here we gaze into the heart of our cultural soul, the well from which the creative spring has spurted. Here we see the long passage of history and the infinite moods of a people. As one looks at the Indian handicrafts, one instinctively senses the unity of all arts even as one is made aware of the unity of life in Indian philosophy. Yet nowhere probably could one find so great a diversity in form, shape and colour as in these crafts. At the same time, it is in this infinite variety that one sees the eternal search for unity. Whether it is in the ensemble of flowers and fruits, birds and animals, leaves and creepers, gods and human beings, whether it is in the *Phulkaris* of Punjab and *Kinkhwabs* of Banaras, or the *Patolas* of Pattan and the *Bandhanis* of Rajasthan, there is a sense of rhythm and harmony.

The sentiment of traditionalism alone cannot however take us very far in our effort to rehabilitate the Indian crafts. The modern demand is for beauty as a supplement to usefulness. Then again the concept of usefulness itself has changed because of the transformation in the mode of our thought, of living, habits and environment. Nor is there any longer the same fastidiousness for

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the purity of the material or the authenticity of the form. With the advent of cheap alloys for jewellery, artificial silk and synthetic stuff like plastic, the emphasis has definitely shifted to cheapness. Similarly the insistence on durability has been replaced by demand for greater variety. Modern taste is restless and prepared to renew and replace articles more easily and quickly.

One wonders if anyone has the heavy task such as rests on the craftsmen. With an artist, it is simple enough. He creates and sets up the standard of art forms and the public falls in with it. But with the craftsman, he has to meet the clientele more than half way. He has to combine beauty with utility and make the new product still embody the old symbol. He has to cater to a customer thousands of miles away and unknown to him, unlike the intimate community in which he lived in olden times. Yet at the same time he has to remain loyal to the traditions of his heritage. While he is expected to produce goods which can stand competition with machine products, he has to produce the same precision and finish with his fingers and hand.

The public should remember that development of handicrafts is entirely different from that of village industries or small scale industries. Not only is each craft highly complicated involving numerous processes, it is also very individualistic and local. Handprinting in Rajasthan is quite different from printing in Andhra. Metal inlay in Hyderabad is different from that in Uttar Pradesh. Every craft differs from region to region. Each has its own traditional ways of production and its own design, shape, colour etc. No one single plan can be applied wholesale all over as in the case of chakkis, cart wheels, charkhas or carpentry and smithy tools. The craftsmen are also scattered, some here and some there. In some cases the craft is reduced to a few individuals who are almost lost in the interior villages and have to be sought and villages combed to find them. Not only each craft, but each centre needs careful study and understanding before any measures for its treatment can be applied. It is, therefore, in the very nature of this country that it calls for great sensitivity and delicate handling, infinite patience and tireless service before any results can be produced. The public must bear with this great heritage of ours and remember that its flowering belonged to another age, another atmosphere, a totally different pattern of living and tempo. In some ways handicrafts seem out of tune with our modern living and

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approach. There is nothing spectacular about them. You do not find them in imposing structures humming with life and lit by a million candle power lights. They have mostly to be unearthed in dark hovels with air pungent with stench. Even though millions are engaged in handicrafts all over the country, they are never found in large concentrations. The tools that produce these crafts are modest and unostentatious. Development of handicrafts cannot therefore be measured through spectacular structures or noisy machines. They speak of an age when dignity lay in silence and beauty in subtlety.

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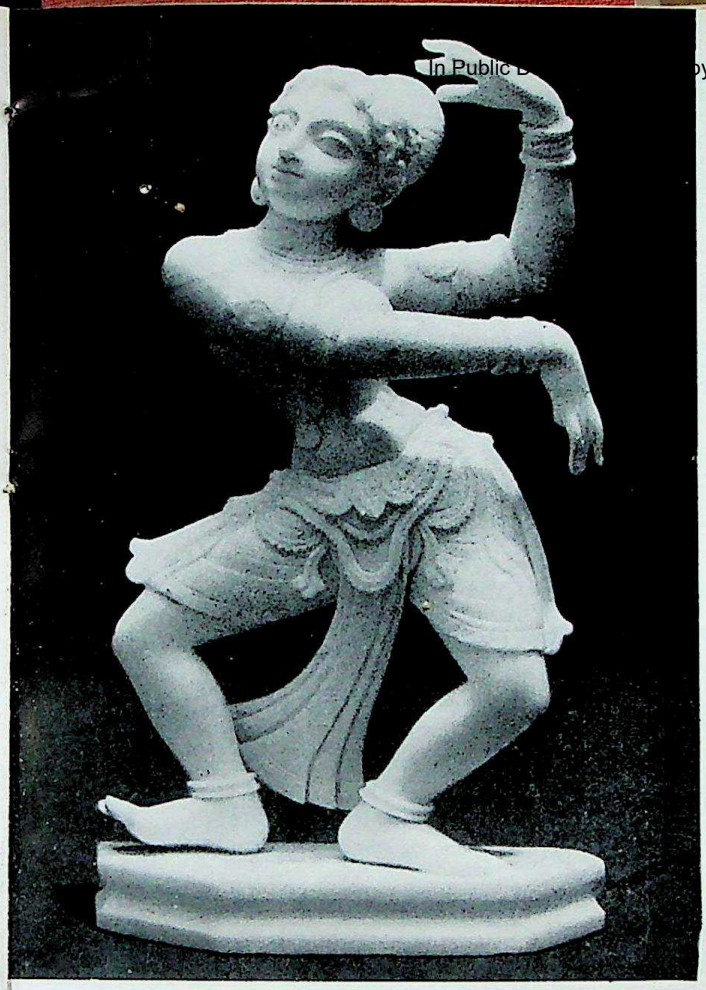

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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9 Tanjore Art Metal Plate decorated with elaborate repoussed silver and copper encrustations.

12 Partly wheeled and partly hand-modelled terra-cotta votive horse. Produced at the potters' village of Panchmura, Bankura District, West Bengal. Height: 6 feet.

13 Young *Kumbhakara* of Panchmura painting a terra-cotta votive horse's sgraffito necklace with lime before the kiln-baking operation.

14 Terra-cotta votive figurine of the mother goddess; produced at the potters' village of Panchmura, Bankura District, West Bengal. Height: 5 inches.

16 Hand-modelled terra-cotta folk toy; elephant with rider from Rajasthan.

17 Painted and glazed clay elephant produced at the All India Handicraft Board's Regional Design Production Centre at Calcutta, West Bengal.

19 *Top left:* Gajalakshmi oil lamp—Madras State.

Bottom right: Hollow cast brass votive horse on wheels. Probably produced in Rajasthan, circa 1900. Height: 6½ inches.

20 Silver and copper repoussed reliefs encrusted on a hand-beaten and engraved brass plate, the central repoussed and inlaid silver medallion of which depicts Gopal (Krishna as the protector of cows). Diameter: 15 inches. Produced by master craftsman Shri Aarumuga Pathar, Thanjavur (Tanjore), Madras.

22 Sridevi—South Indian Bronze.

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24 Front and back views of a copy of a bronze Chola Rani produced at the All India Handicrafts Board's Regional Design Production Centre, Bangalore, Mysore, by the *cire perdue* solid casting process.

25 *Left to right:* bronze images of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman. South India.

26 *Top left:* Nest of copper rice measuring bowls produced at Rampur in Bankura town, West Bengal, by the *cire perdue* hollow casting method. Height: 17 inches.

Bottom right: Craftsman of Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, engraving a brass vase, which was moulded and cast by the *Darja* box method.

27 *Cire perdue* hollow cast bell-metal votive elephant on wheels carrying a *cire per due* solid cast copper image of Budi Mata, goddess of cholera, who sits in a swing in the *howdah*. Produced by the *Kaser* (bell-metalsmiths) of Jagdalpur, Bastar District, Madhya Pradesh. Height: 17 inches.

28 *Cire perdue* hollow cast metal containers adapted for contemporary use from the West Bengal *Dhokra's* (itinerant metalsmiths) traditional forms and decorative elements, by the All India Handicrafts Board's Design Production Centre at Calcutta, West Bengal.

29 Female votary holding a hollow cube with folded hands from which may be suspended an oil lamp or an offering. Early 19th Century Bronze. South India. National Crafts Museum, New Delhi.

30 Detail of one of the two end border designs on an *endi* silk shawl woven by the Mikir women living in the Mikir Hills of Assam. Dimensions: 2½ yards long by 2 feet 6 inches wide.

32 *Top left*: Detail of one of the traditional wrap-around skirts called a *phanek*, woven on a loinloom and worn by the Meitei women of Manipur, the bottom edge of which is embroidered in the *Akoibi* design. Dimensions: 5 feet 5 inches long by 3 feet 8 inches wide.

Lower right: Two women members of the Manipur Dyeing and Weaving Co-operative Society, Ltd., in the village of Thangmeiband, near Imphal, weaving 50-inch width *endi* silk running yardage on a home-made throw-shuttle frame loom, the peddles of which are not unlike metal stirrups.

34 Miss Chatuki Devi of Imphal, Manipur, weaving one of the half widths of an extra weft 'Bakey' design bed-spread on a loin loom set up in her house veranda. The other half of the bed-spread, already woven, is seen in the foreground of the illustration.

35 Mother and daughter in the village of Thangmeiband, near Imphal, Manipur, weaving an extra weft cotton bed-spread 60 inches wide in the 'Bakey' design on a fly-shuttle frame loom equipped with six healds, two for weaving the ground of cloth and four for the spot designs and borders.

 36 Block printed calico produced at Sanganer, Rajasthan. Width: 36 inches.

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37 Craftswoman of Sanganer blocking with a liquid clay over madder-red designs already block printed on the cloth, in order that the clay may resist the indigo blue dye-bath into which the whole piece of cloth will be immersed after the clay is dry.

38 *Upper left*: Chaman Chotte, master craftsman and oldest member of the *Vaghari* caste of temple cloth printers of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, repairing a black line with dye in a floral motif which failed to print perfectly in the original blocking.

Bottom right: Detail of one of the many block printed and dyed madder-red, black and white cotton Ahmedabad temple cloth design combinations depicting the mother cult goddess Mata, this one being referred to as the Pethogarh Mata. Dimensions: 45 inches wide by 72 inches long.

39 Detail of a *Kalamkari* cotton temple cloth executed at the *Kalamkari* Art Pilot Training Centre at Kalahasti, Chittur District, Andhra Pradesh, painted with mordanted dyes by means of an indigenous pen (*kalam*) and brushes dipped in an iron sulphide solution and mordanted vegetable dye pigments, depending upon where pen-lines or variously coloured areas of the design are required.

40 Detail of a cotton and Atlas silk *Toran* (doorway decoration) embroidered in floss-silk the design motifs of which are typical of the *Koli* community of Saurashtra, Gujarat. Dimensions: 26 inches wide by 50 inches long.

41 Detail of a tied and dyed chiffon sari executed by master craftsman Mohammad Sadiq of the Tie and Dye Workers Co-operative Society Ltd., at Nala Nilgaran, Jaipur, Rajasthan. Length: 6 yards.

44 A young Saurashtra girl in Chorwadi village, Junagadh District, Gujarat, embroidering her dowry garments and the *Torans* for her future home.

46 Wife of a cultivator (*Kanbi*) in Dhaneti village, Gujarat, embroidering a full-gathered, pottery-red *Khadi* skirt (*Ghagara*) in various colours of cotton thread and with mirrors (*shishadar*) worked in the interlaced buttonhole stitch.

53 *Kantha* Embroidery from Bengal.

55 Hand-knotted woollen pile carpet from Mirzapur.

56 Kashmiri felt *namda* embroidered in woollen yarn in chain-stitched floral and creeper designs; reminiscent in its colour scheme at least, of the carpets woven in France in the town of Aubusson which has been famous for them since 1531.

62 An enamelled gold necklace, combined with seed pearls, from Jaipur, Rajasthan.

65 *Top*: Basket-makers of Antheim Leikei, a locality of Imphal, Manipur, splitting the bamboo and weaving it to produce a *chengbol*, the large, lidded, hamper-like basket on legs seen in the background of the illustration. Height: 2 feet 4 inches.

Bottom right: Lidded basket called a *phiruk*, woven at Kakching, Manipur, with natural coloured bamboo splinths and black splinths, the latter soaked in mud for some days after having been immersed in a dye made from the bark of the *kuki* tree. Height: 1 foot 6½ inches.

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67 Carved and painted wooden peacock produced at Bassi, Chittorgarh District, Rajasthan, the back of which forms a sliding lid for the hollowed-out body to contain grains and other temple offerings. Height: 12 inches.

68 The wife and helpmate of a carver and lathe-turner of wooden toys, house-temples and decorative furniture at Bassi, Chittorgarh District, Rajasthan, giving a background coating of water-based white pigment to one of her husband's carved wooden peacock containers prior to painting it with various deep and bright colours which, when dry, will be varnished.

71 Modification of a carved and painted wooden peacock produced by the craftsmen and craftswomen of Bassi, Chittorgarh District, Rajasthan, which is illustrated on page 67 and captioned above.

74 Painted model carved in *punki* wood (*Glotia rattle formis*), produced by the wood carvers of the village of Kondapalli, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, this being one of several such models which depict the local weavers at work on the various weaving processes. Here, the model represents a woman winding hand-spun yarn, already twisted, on a bamboo cage. Height : 6½ inches.

75 *Top left*: *Bharatanatyam* figure carved out of ivory at the Regional Design Production Centre of the All India Handicrafts Board at Bangalore, Mysore. Height: 5 inches.

Bottom right: Master craftsman of ivory carving at the Regional Design Production Centre at Bangalore, Mysore, giving the finishing touches to a carved ivory figure of *Bhoodevi*, the earth goddess, with a double-pointed steel chisel.

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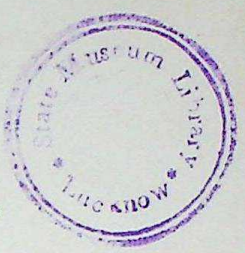

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